

Message Text

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ACTION EA-06

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9496

C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 1065

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, BM, CH

SUBJECT: NE WIN UNWORRIED ABOUT PRC INTENTIONS OR INDOCHINA AFTER-
MATH

REF: RANGOON 0695

SUMMARY: NEW AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR FINDS NE WIN IN GOOD HEALTH
AND VIGOR AND OPTIMISTIC ABOUT PRC INTENTIONS. NOR DOES NE WIN
EVINCE MUCH CONCERN ABOUT THE IMPORT OF INDOCHINA EVENTS FOR
BURMA. END SUMMARY.

1. NEW AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR ROBERT S. LAURIE, WHO PRESENTED
CREDENTIALS APRIL 18, 1975, SAYS HE FOUND NE WIN HEALTHY, "IN
GOOD VIGOR," AND OPTIMISTIC ABOUT BURMA'S RELATIONS WITH ITS
NEIGHBORS.

2. IN BRIEF TOUR D'HORIZON, NE WIN POINTED TO SOVIET AND PRC
LEADERSHIP CHANGES, TOGETHER WITH THE U.S. PRESIDENT'S CONFRONT-
ATION" WITH CONGRESS, AS EVIDENCES OF AN "UNSETTLED" WORLD SIT-
UATION; HOWEVER, HE EVINced NO ALARM ABOUT IMPLICATIONS FOR
BURMA. HE WAS INTERESTED IN EVENTS IN INDOCHINA, BUT DID NOT
TREAT THEM AS THREAT TO BURMA.

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3. IN RESPONSE TO LAURIE'S QUESTIONS, NE WIN DISPLAYED A SIMILAR

UP-BEAT OUTLOOK ABOUT THE BCP INSURGENCY. HE MENTIONED THE ENCOURAGEMENT HE HAD DRAWN FROM THE RELATIVELY LOW LEVEL OF CHINESE INVOLVEMENT ENCOUNTERED IN THE RECENT CAMPAIGNS, AND GAVE LAURIE THE IMPRESSION HE IS CONTEMPLATING A CONCENTRATED ARMY EFFORT TO PUSH THE BCP RIGHT UP TO THE BORDER. NE WIN APPARENTLY DID NOT ANTICIPATE A STRONG PRC REACTION.

4. COMMENT: AS IN REFTTEL, THIS READING ON NE WIN'S MOOD IS LIMITED AND SUBJECTIVE; HOWEVER, THE TWO READINGS TOGETHER GIVE US A RATHER CONSISTENT PICTURE OF A LEADER WHO IS PROVIDING AFFIRMATIVE DIRECTION ON THE BASIS OF OPTIMISTIC ASSUMPTIONS. THAT THERE HAS BEEN A PROGRESSIVE BUILDUP OF NE WIN'S CONFIDENCE WITH RESPECT TO PRC INTENTIONS IS SUGGESTED BY LAURIE'S OBSERVATION THAT WHEREAS NE WIN HAD SPOKEN TO DEPARTING AMBASSADOR WOODARD (LAURIE'S PREDECESSOR) WITH DEEP FOREBODING ABOUT "BIG BROTHER", ON THIS OCCASION HE DID NOT EVEN USE THE TERM "BIG BROTHER". CLEARLY THE GUB, WHICH HAD BEEN WORRIED ABOUT POSSIBLE PRC REACTION TO THE RECENT GUB ARMY CAMPAIGNS IN THE NORTHEAST, IS NOW RELIEVED AND GREATLY ENCOURAGED BY THE CONTINUED LACK OF SUCH A REACTION.

OSBORN

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